

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for conducting electronic commerce comprising:

issuing a plurality of electronic tokens from a mall service provider server to a first web server, the electronic tokens adapted for use in electronic transactions for purchase or rental of products or services from a plurality of other web servers;

maintaining a first database in the mall service provider server, the first database including account information for the first web server;

maintaining a second database in the mall service provider server comprising records of electronic transactions involving use of the electronic tokens at the plurality of other web servers; and

for each electronic transaction, recording a royalty transaction in the account information for web servers at which electronic transactions using the electronic tokens are conducted.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein a plurality of users are registered with the first web server, each user having an account to which a subset of the plurality of electronic tokens are allotted.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the first database further includes account information for each one of the plurality of users.

4. The method of claim 2 wherein the subset of the plurality of tokens allotted to each one of the plurality of users is based upon purchase of electronic

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tokens at a predetermined rate of exchange by web servers.

5. The method of claim 2 wherein the subset of the plurality of tokens allotted to each one of the plurality of users is provided as an incentive to reward customer loyalty.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein issuing electronic tokens from the mall service provider server to the first web server further comprises issuing manufacturer's tokens adapted for use at only predetermined ones of the plurality of other web servers.

7. The method of claim 6 further comprising maintaining a third database in the mall service provider server that includes a listing of products and services that the manufacturer's tokens may be used to purchase or rent.

8. The method of claim 1 further comprising reimbursing one of the plurality of other web servers for electronic tokens received during an electronic transaction.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein issuing a plurality of electronic tokens from the mall service provider server further comprises issuing gift certificate tokens to the first web server.

10. The method of claim 1 wherein issuing a plurality of electronic tokens from the mall service

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provider server further comprises issuing a plurality of electronic tokens adapted for use in electronic transactions involving competitive bidding for products or services.

11. The method of claim 1 further comprising maintaining a third database in the mall service provider server that includes a listing of which ones of the plurality of other web servers accept electronic tokens issued to the first web site.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein the first web server further permits purchase or rental of products or services from the first web server using the electronic tokens.

13. The method of claim 1 wherein issuing a plurality of electronic tokens from the mall service provider server further comprises issuing a first group of the electronic tokens to a vendor server that oversees electronic transactions using the first group of the electronic tokens through point of sale terminals.

14. The method of claim 1 wherein maintaining the first database in the mall service provider server further comprises maintaining a record indicating how many of the plurality of electronic tokens are available for use.

15. A server operated by a mall service provider comprising:

- a network interface through which the server communicates a first web server;
- a database;

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a memory;

a processor that executes software stored in the memory, the software including one or more programmed routines, the programmed routines comprising:

a routine for issuing a plurality of electronic tokens from the mall service provider server to the first web server, the electronic tokens adapted for use in electronic transactions for purchase or rental of products or services from a plurality of other web servers;

a first database routine for updating records relating to the electronic tokens issued to the first web server;

a second database routine for updating records of electronic transactions involving use of the electronic tokens at the plurality of other web servers; and

a routine for recording a royalty transaction for each electronic transaction conducted at web servers using the electronic tokens.

16. The server of claim 15 wherein a plurality of users are registered with the first web server, each user having an account to which a subset of the plurality of electronic tokens are allotted.

17. The server of claim 16 wherein the first database routine further comprises updating account information for each one of the plurality of users.

18. The server of claim 16 wherein the subset of the plurality of tokens allotted to each one

of the plurality of users is based upon purchase of electronic tokens at a predetermined rate of exchange.

19. The server of claim 16 wherein the subset of the plurality of tokens allotted to each one of the plurality of users is provided as an incentive to reward customer loyalty.

20. The server of claim 15 wherein the routine for issuing the plurality of electronic tokens further comprises issuing manufacturer's tokens adapted for use at only to purchase or rent the manufacturer's products and services.

21. The server of claim 20 wherein the programmed routines further comprise a third database routine that updates a listing of the products and services that the manufacturer's tokens may be used to purchase or rent.

22. The server of claim 15 wherein the programmed routines further comprise a routine that records a reimbursement to one of the plurality of other web servers for electronic tokens received during an electronic transaction.

23. The server of claim 15 the routine for issuing the plurality of electronic tokens further comprises issuing gift certificate tokens to the first web server.

24. The server of claim 15 the routine for issuing the plurality of electronic tokens further comprises issuing a plurality of electronic tokens

adapted for use in electronic transactions involving competitive bidding for products or services.

25. The server of claim 15 wherein the programmed routines further comprise a third database routine that records a listing of which ones of the plurality of other web servers accept electronic tokens issued to the first web site.

26. The server of claim 15 wherein the first web server further permits purchase or rental of products or services from the first web server using the electronic tokens.

27. The server of claim 15 wherein the routine for issuing the plurality of electronic tokens further comprises issuing a first group of the electronic tokens to a vendor server that oversees electronic transactions using the first group of the electronic tokens through point of sale terminals.

28. The server of claim 15 wherein the first database routine further comprises maintaining a record indicating how many of the plurality of electronic tokens are available for use.

29. The server of claim 15 wherein the second database routine further comprises recording the number of electronic tokens exchanged in each of the electronic transactions at the plurality of other web servers.

30. A method of conducting electronic commerce, the method comprising:

opening a user account with a first member vendor;

issuing electronic tokens of a first type to a user, and adding the electronic tokens to a user account maintained by the first member vendor;

exchanging the electronic tokens in the user account for electronic tokens of a second type, the electronic tokens of the second type being issued by a second member vendor;

purchasing or renting products or services through the second member vendor using the electronic tokens of the second type, wherein prices for the products or services are listed in units of electronic tokens of the second type; and

transferring compensation from the first member vendor to the second member vendor in an amount equal to the value of the electronic tokens of the second type.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein issuing electronic tokens of the first type further comprises permitting the user to purchase the electronic tokens of the first type from the first member vendor.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein permitting the user to purchase the electronic tokens of the first type from the first member vendor further comprises permitting the user to conduct an on-line transaction using a credit card or other electronic payment system to purchase the electronic tokens.

33. The method of claim 31, wherein permitting the user to purchase the electronic tokens of the first type comprises permitting the user to

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conduct an off-line transaction to purchase the electronic tokens.

34. The method of claim 30 further comprising:

exchanging a subset of electronic tokens in the user account for a group of electronic tokens of a third type, the electronic tokens of the third type being issued by a third member vendor; and

purchasing or renting products or services through the third member vendor using the electronic tokens of the third type, wherein prices for the products or services are listed in units of electronic tokens of the third type.

35. The method of claim 30 further comprising:

notifying a mall service provider that electronic tokens have been issued to the user.

36. The method of claim 35 wherein the user account is maintained at the mall service provider.

37. The method of claim 30 wherein a service charge is deducted each time electronic tokens issued by the first member vendor are exchanged for tokens issued by the second member vendor.

38. The method of claim 30 further comprising:

notifying a mall service provider each time a user registers with a member vendor.

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39. The method of claim 30 wherein purchasing or renting services or products further comprises:

competitively bidding on one or more of the products or services.

40. The method of claim 30 further comprising:

recording a royalty transaction for each electronic transaction conducted using the electronic tokens.

41. The method of claim 30 further comprising:

recording a toll charge when the second member vendor requests information relating to the customer from the first member vendor.

42. The method of claim 30 further comprising:

recording a toll charge when the first member vendor reimburses the second member vendor for electronic tokens.